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SUBJECT Housing in City of Krasnodar

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1. The population of Krasnodar in 1941 was approximately 270 thousand. It was not an industrial city but the housing situation was nevertheless acute. The City Housing Department (Zhilishchnyy Otdel) allowed but seven square meters of living space to each citizen, unless, of course, the citizen enjoyed special privileges.
2. Very little new construction was done up to 1941. The bulk of the people living in central Krasnodar lived in old, formerly private homes along the main streets. These houses, some, 50 or 60 years old, had been converted into apartments. Of two-story construction, eight to 10 families would live in each building in one or two room apartments, sharing communal baths and kitchens.
3. During the early thirties, three cooperative apartment houses were constructed. They were planned to pay out in about 15 years. A down payment of about two thousand rubles was made by the apartment applicant and the balance was to be paid out at about 60 rubles per month. When paid out the owner had the right to live there without interference. However, this idea was abandoned in 1938 or 1939 because it was considered private property. The buildings reverted to the City Housing Authority and the purchasers were refunded a portion of their investment; they paid regular rent from then on to the city. These co-ops were three stories high and of 1½ thickness of brick. They were fairly modern, with two and three rooms in each apartment. The apartments all had private kitchens but only the three room apartments had a bathroom, a communal bath being located on each floor for dwellers of the two room apartments. They were located on:
 - a) #28 Krasnaya Street - 50 apartments
 - b) #38 Proletarskay Street - 36 apartments
 - c) Dubinka Street - 50 apartments
4. Located at #4 Kommonarov Street was an apartment house for industrial officials, known as the House of Responsible Functionaries. There were 40 or 50 apartments consisting of from three to five rooms, each with a private bath and kitchen. The building was constructed of red brick three stories high with a smooth, plaster finish on the outside. It was of good quality and well finished off inside. Monthly rental depended on the income of the resident.

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5. At #35 Sovietskaya Street and on Pushkin Street were two apartments known as the Houses of Scientists. Each was three stories high with 30 to 50 apartments in each. They were of red brick construction faced with smooth plaster. Residents were mainly professors, instructors and doctors of medicine. Rental depended upon the income of the dweller.
6. At #2 Sedina Street was located the largest apartment house in the city. It was known as the Military House and was for military and NKVD personnel. Of plain, brick construction painted grey, it was four stories high and contained one hundred apartments, each with three to five rooms, private bath and kitchen. There was a commissary, tailor shop and kindergarten for children in the basement.
7. The highly placed Party and governmental officials had their own private homes or villas. The second-string officials, however, were housed at # Sedina Street in a three-story apartment house containing about 60 apartments, each with two to five room apartments. This building was made of brick and was painted grey.
8. At #12 or #14 [not recalled exactly] Krasnaya Street was a three-story, brick apartment house, painted grey. It contained about 30 apartments, each apartment with two or three rooms. It was known as the House of Oil Industry Personnel and was set aside for oil refinery workers only. Rents were based on the income of the dweller.
9. At either 107 or 117 Krasnaya Street was located the House for River Transportation Sailors. It was a four-storied brick house with about 40 apartments, each with one, two or three room apartments. There were communal baths and a few private kitchens.
10. Krasnodar had five colleges and universities plus about five institutes. There were about 15 thousand students requiring housing since they came from surrounding towns. There were four or five new dormitories constructed for a portion of them, the balance being housed in three or four dormitories made over from old hotels and other buildings. Student rental was about 10 rubles a month. There were no accommodations in the dormitories for married students.
11. The common workers and laborers lived in one-family, small, frame houses, best described as shacks. Some of these were located in the city proper; most, however, were on the outskirts of the city and along the banks of the Kuban River. Some areas were set aside by the various industries as "special housing projects". There was a lot of available space outside of the city and an area would be taken over by an industry for its workers. Small plots of ground would be allotted to the factory worker. He could then borrow a small amount of money from a special fund at the factory to buy enough lumber, cement, sand, nails, roofing and glass to construct a two-room shack. The worker did the work himself. A wooden frame was constructed first. Across the upright studs he would weave small branches. A plaster would then be applied inside and out, the wall sometimes being six to eight inches thick. The floor was mostly of wood, but sometimes was of earth. A tin roof covered the shack. A small stove was usually used for heating and cooking. These houses had no bathrooms nor modern kitchens. Some had a single wire for one or two light bulbs. A well or outside, communal faucet supplied water. An outside privy served as a toilet. A crew of city health inspectors examined and limed these privies regularly and a crew of Kalmuks was used to clean them when needed.
12. Up to 1941 it was very difficult to obtain building materials of all types because available items were given to industry first. The poorly paid worker usually had trouble obtaining anything except a few pieces of lumber for a frame and tin for a roof. His comfort depended to a great deal upon his ingenuity. Because of the priority enjoyed by industry, various factories were able to divert some materials to housing for their workers. Even though the few apartment houses constructed from 1930 to 1941 were supposed to have bathrooms, for example, it was impossible in many cases to obtain sufficient fixtures for those planned.

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13. Total depreciation on new buildings was figured at 30 years, a low figure but necessary because of poor construction. As an example, at one time it was planned to demolish an old church located near a fairly new apartment house. Although located a same distance away, it was decided that even the smallest powder charge possible would cause the apartment house to collapse. New buildings would tremble with passing traffic. Wiring, heating and water pipes were all exposed. Lumber used in flooring was of such poor quality that wide gaps appeared in the flooring of new buildings. Walls between apartments were very thin.
14. Attempts made to fireproof buildings in accordance with city codes were fairly successful in new buildings. There were no fire escapes outside of the new apartment houses, however. A city order called for flush toilets, running water and central heating in new apartment houses, something that did not exist in the old, converted houses.

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